



Volume 2, Issue 3

March/April 2006

Commander's Corner

March FRG Meeting

Come, Tuesday 14 March 06 at 6pm as we learn how to Cope with Separation. Learn the new and valuable things that are available to use as our soldiers are deployed.



I was sitting in the New Baghdad Police Headquarters building yesterday, speaking with the Iraqi Police Commander for New Baghdad. As we are now going into our third month I couldn't help but ask myself as I sat there, "are we making a difference?" All of a sudden the Police Commander excitedly pointed at the TV. My interpreter explained to me that on Al Iraqia TV (Nobody in Iraq watches Al Jazeera) they were reporting about four mortar tubes that were seized by Iraqi Police and US MP forces the day before. I then realized that they were, in fact, talking about none other than our very own 2LT Rivera and the "Diablos" of 2nd Platoon who had been the one who confiscated the mortar tubes. A flood of emotions washed over me—pride, confidence, and a sense that **WE ARE making a difference every day.** For every negative story about the mission here on the US news, there are a thousand great stories of heroism, courage, and vigilance that never get reported. Your Soldiers continue to make this place better every day. The work isn't easy, but nothing worthwhile ever is. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your continued support of these great Soldiers and the 258th Military Police Company.

GATORS!

CPT BRANDSMA

Commanding

January Promotions

PFC Kindschi

SPC Comier

SPC Sedotal

SPC Todd

Hero of the Week

SSG Rawlins

SGT Botts

SPC Staton

SPC Solis (Sustainer of the Month)

Inside this Issue

From the desk of the 1SG	2
Rear D Corner	2
From the FRG Leader	3
Upcoming Activities	4
MWR Passbook	5
iLeap Testing Tips	6
Interview with Cpt. Brandsma	7

From the Desk of the 1SG

Hello Gator Family,

The Soldiers of 258 continue to amaze me daily as they continue to perform their mission here in Iraq. They continually set high standards for performance and safety while covering an area normally maintained by two companies. We have been performing our mission now for over two months and the Soldiers have established a daily routine making time go by. They have adjusted to the climate and have made their barracks as homey as possible. Even though they are deployed they are getting treated well with 24hr turn-around laundry service free, cable TV, internet services, outstanding food service free, PX facilities, and a 24hr gym free of charge.

We have already started sending Soldiers home for their Rest and Recuperation Leave. Each Soldier will be afforded an opportunity to spend 15 days at home free of charge. Their leave time begins when they arrive in the US and ends when they depart the US. Flights to and from their leave destination are absolutely free of charge. We are trying to accommodate each Soldier's leave request while maintaining unit strength by spreading the leave slots over the next year.

Take care and be safe, we will continually update the Rear Detachment Commander and FRG on all Soldier issues and news that pertains to the 258th MP Company.

Thanks, for your continued support,
1SG Koch

Rear D Corner

Gator Soldiers, Families, and Friends!!

Greetings Gators! Another month down. I hope all is well in Gator land. I expect many more of you home soon taking full advantage of the Rest and Recuperation leave program. As always be sure to give me a courtesy call upon your arrival at your final leave destination. If any of you are in the Fort Polk area during leave feel free to drop by and say a few words.

As always my number one mission as the rear detachment is to support the soldiers forward, maintain strong interaction with the FRG in keeping the family members informed, and taking care of the families. Once again, thanks to the families for all that you do to support your Soldiers and this company. Keep them in your thoughts and prayers. Any service or family member whom wishes to contact me may reach me at (337) 531-2825 or (337) 208-3505.

"Soldier Hard"

SFC JONES

USA

Rear Detachment Commander



New Information

- **DBIDS:** All ID card holders need to be registered with DBIDS (Defense Biometrics Identification System) a.s.a.p. to ensure that you will not be denied access to post once the program is fully implemented. If you have previously registered with DBIDS, but have recently been issued a new ID card, please be sure to stop and make sure that the system will correctly recognize your new ID with your existing information. Location for registration, Visitor's Center outside the Main Post Entrance or In/Out Processing.
- **Video Teleconferencing:** The equipment at Fort Polk is running and waiting, however, there remains to be problems with the accessibility of these devices to our soldiers. We will be informed when capabilities are favorable and the opportunity becomes available.
- **Cost Of R&R Travel:** The cost to deployed military members for their travel during R&R (Rest & Relaxation) leave? The Army pays for the soldier's route from their current location to the final destination of their choice. Keep in mind that soldiers are encouraged not to drive any vehicle or consume ANY alcoholic beverages for a minimum of 4-6 days after arrival due to safety issues.
- **BJACH:** The Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital is working on an updated system to allow for increased same0day appointments and more readily available appointments.
- **Central Registration:** The old post library, located at the intersection of Radio Rd. & Mississippi Ave, will now house Central Registration.

New Information Continued pg 4

From the FRG Leader

Mrs. Silvia

Our February Meeting has to be the most memorable meeting I have been able to precede over so far. We were able to meet our new incoming commander, Cpt. Denmark, currently commander of the 91st Det., 519th MP Bn. In favor of Valentine's he gave us a little information about himself. He is a Virgo, likes to read and enjoys long walks on the beach. After meeting each spouse he answered any questions that we had for him, and let us know that he has an open door policy towards spouses and soldiers alike.

After enjoying the different dishes that were brought for the potluck, we shared with each other how we met our "Special Valentine Soldier". Unique stories of prison, deployments, "hook-ups", drive-by shooting cases, a brother's friend, and the look from across a crowded room filled the last hour of our meeting. WOW! There are so many different ways to meet your soul mate – and to do it without either of you speaking the others language! Cupid was definitely at play there!!! Thank you to each of you who shared your special story of true love.

The soldier's have received their first box of Birthday Bag's and a very large amount of Valentine's for Soldiers! We will work on our next box to send in May and June, where we will make a flag and attach pictures. So please email or send in your family picture to include on the flag. (Family pictures of single soldiers are wanted!!!)

Make sure to read the Interview with Cpt. Brandsma, as he answers questions from the spouses of the 258th MP Co. As always, please email or call with any questions you may have. Check us out on the web...www.gators258frg.com



New Information cont.

- New post pet policy: The Garrison Commander recently issued a new post per policy. According to the new mandate, pets living on post need to be registered and micro-chipped immediately. Failure to do so, may result in the loss of pet privileges. Certain species of potentially "aggressive" pets (i.e. Rottweilers, Pit Bulls, etc.) must have been registered by 10 January 2006 in order to be granted "grand-fathered" privileges in order to remain on post. In addition, owners must carry \$300,000.00 insurance on these "aggressive" breeds. This new policy will be strictly enforced. To make an appointment with Veterinary Services, call 531-1322.

Upcoming Activities

- Saturday, 4 March 2006, bring the family to Alligator Lake for Fun Day 10 am – 4 pm. Free day of fun.
- The Showboat Theatre Presents...A psychological thriller. The Stanway Case, Dinner Theatre: March 11, 16, 18, 25 and for Performance Only: March 10, 17, 24. Join the FRG on Saturday 18 March 06 as will enjoy the play together for a Parents Night Out.

Upcoming Activities cont.

The JRTC and Fort Polk will hosts the annual Easter Egg Hunt on 08 APR 06 at 1100 hours at the Perez Youth Sports Complex to celebrate Easter. The event is open for youth ranging from infant to age eleven, who are family members of active duty Soldiers, retirees, and eligible civilians employed at Fort Polk. Games and activities will begin at 1100 with prizes provided for all participants. The Easter Egg Hunt age groups are infant to three years, four to six years, seven to eight years, and nine to eleven years. Pictures with the Easter Bunny are available for parents to purchase from the Arts and Crafts Program. The Easter Egg Hunt, games, and activities will continue until the event concludes at 1300.

Friday, 7 April 2006, Family Fun Night 5pm at the Showboat Theatre

258th MP Co FRG Family Fun Day. Free for all 258th MP Co FRG families of deployed soldiers. Contact us for further details.

Saturday, 29 April 2006, Springfest 2006. 8am at Alligator Lake

Saturday, 15 April 2006, Parent's Night Out-activity to be announced.

May meeting we will be making "stars & stripes" for the soldiers. Please send in a picture of your family to attach to the stars for the Fourth of July decorations. We will also be making our own version of the flag, with hands for stars and messages/pictures for stripes.



Deployed Spouses Passbook

Spouses of deployed Soldiers are now authorized to use a numbered card to take advantage of enhanced Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs and services. The first step to enjoying these services is receiving your MWR Passbook -- a ticket to discounts, freebies, classes, trips and special events for you and your family to enjoy. Spouses can take up a new sport like golf or bowling, take an out-of-town shopping trip or soak up some of the regional culture and cuisine. Passbooks are available at the Family Readiness Center, bldg 924, on Mississippi Avenue. A valid ID card is required to receive this benefit. Recipients should sign their passbooks immediately.

One of the benefits MWR offers parents is the use of the Child Development Center and School Age Services programs for up to 16 hours monthly. The program is called "parent time" and is offered as an hourly care option. To reserve space, call the CDC at 531-1954 or SAS at 531-7574. Child care vouchers can be picked up at the FRC. Children can be brought to the CDC or SAS at the reserved time and the voucher used as payment. Children must be registered with Child and Youth Services to receive this benefit. There is no registration fee for families of deployed Soldiers. A one-stop registration service is offered at the CYS Center, bldg 400, corner of Mississippi Avenue and Radio Road. For more information call 531-1955.

MWR also invites you to visit their web site at fortpolkmwr.com. It contains information about MWR activities and events, and links to keep you informed of special offers only available to family members of deployed Soldiers.



Soldiers from 3rd Platoon

Kodak Moments of the Month

Although we would love to publish every picture sent, we only have room for a few. Please email pictures to us at gators258frg@yahoo.com.

[SPC Schrader hands out toys to Iraqi boy outside IPS](#)



Testing Tips

by Ms. Koch

The following notes are reflective of my personal opinions and guidelines to my parents and my students!

What Tests Are Given?

The I-leap is given to grades 3,5,6 and 7. It is a newly developed test that correlates with the guidelines set forth by the Louisiana Department of Education.

The LEAP Test is given to grades 4 and 8 measures the accumulation of knowledge throughout their school career.

Both Tests are measured with state standards; in other words, they are tested on what is being taught in the classroom. Teachers follow the Comprehensive Curriculum Guide provided by the State Department in order to have consistency and fluency in the subjects.

What can Parents do to Help?

In the weeks to come makes sure that read any materials sent by the school regarding testing procedures.

Please ensure that your child attend everyday during test week.

Avoid unnecessary stress.

Have your child eat a good breakfast! The school provides breakfast if there is no time at home

Get plenty of sleep; at least 8 hours ☺

Encourage them!! Let them know that whichever test they take to do their very best!

Teacher Notes☺

We encourage our students to take their time and read the question not just once but twice.

Think logically! If they are not 100% sure of the correct answer use their deductive reasoning skills to make a good and logical choice.



Upon preparing the March /April Newsletter, we learned of the upcoming change of command, and CPT. Brandsma leaving the 258th MP Co. The spouses of the FRG, collaborated and came up with the following questions that we wanted the commander to answer for us. Enjoy his response as each of us did.

Interview with CPT Brandsma

1. As you get closer to the change of command, what is mostly rolling through your mind?

One of the first things they teach you in basic training is how to pick up garbage. I'm serious. This is the essence of the "police call"—the subtle art of spreading out evenly, at double arm interval, and walking online and cleaning up the area that you and your unit had just occupied. I can remember practicing this glorious Army tradition many times as my TAC officers would stand over us and repeat "Always leave your foxhole better then you found it," over and over again. But, like so many things in the Army that seem pointless at the time, that concept of always improving your position before you leave it for someone else continues to ring true to me today. Looking back on the last year and a half as Commander of the Finest Military Police Company in the Army I find myself asking if I did, in fact, improve my foxhole while I was here? As Commander, it would be self-righteous and self-centered for me answer this question myself and to say "yes, this is a better Company now because of me". Rather, I think the question is: what did we do to improve our foxhole while we were here? The facts are plain: in the last year and a half we have conducted more aggressive and realistic training then any other unit I've ever been associated with. Here we are—literally on the other side of the planet. Are we a better trained unit? Are we a better equipped unit? Did we improve our foxhole? Absolutely.

2. Thinking back on the last two years, what event/one moment stand out most in your mind?

There are so many things that have happened over the last year and a half that I'll never forget (the first Soldier I reenlisted, watching the sun set behind the guidon in Kuwait), and some things that prompt me to occasionally knock my head into a wall in the hopes of developing amnesia (falling off the stage at the Christmas Party, getting my HMMWV stuck in the mud as Iraqi children are frantically waving and telling me "don't go in there!"). One event, however, stands above all others. During the Viper Commander's Cup competition in 2005 there was an incredible rivalry between the 258th MP Company and our sister Company, the 204th. Their Commander, CPT Allison, was a battle buddy from OIF 1 and a great friend of mine, but there were times that got so headed during the competition that the Battalion Commander had to physically separate our two Companies, lest they tear each other apart (it didn't help that I fixed a bayonet to a rifle and stabbed the 204th Company sign several times in the process). The first day of competition did not go well for the mighty Gators. We were far behind after coming in third in basketball, second in football and dead last in the rope climb. The next day was crucial as we needed to win all the events if we were to have any chance of winning the cup. The first event of the day was the swamp run, a 3.5 mile run through a swamp that at some points was chest-deep Louisiana muck and mud, followed by the softball tournament. That day we won the swamp run because of the unbelievable grit and determination of Soldiers who were determined not to quit when things got difficult. That night we won the Softball tournament, defeating the defending post softball champions, because of the pride and fighting spirit of Soldiers who were determined to do everything they could to win. The moment that I will always remember is SSG Huey handing me the ball after the game and telling me, "here sir, we won this for you" while SPC Clausen held the guidon high on field and the entire Company mobbed the pitchers mound.

2. Continued: We ended up losing the competition by two points, but at that moment on the mound is one I'll never forget—the uninhibited pride and enthusiasm at being a part of the 258th Military Police Company. I still have the ball.

3. Out of all the training, and field cycles, which one brings you the most pride, and sense of accomplishment?

I'm running down a machine gun range next to 1LT DeFrancisco, passing pop-up silhouettes and targets, chasing after SSG Habig. Habig jumps down in a prone position behind some sand bags, and yells at the two Soldiers on behind him, "GOT YOU COVERED!" and begins shooting live bullets at the target 25m in front of him, knocking it down immediately. He continues to suppress the target as his two Soldiers, chased by 1LT Charbonneau and 2LT Smith bound in a perfect 3-5 second sprint to their own positions on his left and right. "COVER ME WHILE I MOVE!" Habig bellowed and we're off again down range while his Soldiers engage targets in front of them, one with a light machine gun, and one with a rifle. Under the watchful eye of the two Lieutenants, their bullets do not stray into our "lane" but are continuing to engage while we move forward. We repeat this process until we are up on the objective—a bunker with a lone gunman hidden inside. The machine gunner on the left engages the bunker, keeping the enemy's head down, while Habig consolidates with his other teammate into a good assault position on the *right* side. He then fires a star cluster signal flare up into the air and the machine gunner shifts his fires to the *left* side of the bunker, and continues to fire. SSG Habig and his driver low crawl to the very last covered and concealed position on the right side before we're right on top of the bunker. The rounds are snapping past us, about 20 meters away, which feels like 20 inches, and sounds like 200 bees buzzing past our position. SSG Habig and his driver then engage the bunker with two hand grenades, completely destroying the enemy inside. "CEASE FIRE!" he yells and consolidates his team on the objectives to redistribute ammunition and prepare for a counter attack, which comes from the wood-line about 200m past the bunker. SSG Habig's team fights them off until they are out of ammunition. I turn and look back at the last 300m they just assaulted across, I look at the bunker they just destroyed, and finally, at three incredibly exhausted Soldiers who are fueled at this point only on their adrenaline. "Men," I say with admiration and pride, "that was an incredible live fire."

"Thanks sir," Habig says, his white smile standing out in start contrast to the dark camouflage paint he has on his face. "Can we do it again?"

4. Fort Polk takes a while to get use to, the weather, the people and the outside community, what will you miss most about Fort Polk?

This one is easy—the camaraderie. When I was a Lieutenant in Germany, I was all by myself with my platoon on a post that was a 45 minute drive away from the rest of the Company. Here at Ft. Polk, I am surrounded by the most excellent Officers, NCOs, and Soldiers I've ever served with. It still sort of feels like Dances with Wolves because I can't understand what the heck the local people are saying and I occasionally see horses on the highway, but to be this close to other MPs has been tremendous.

5. "What was one thing that you can remember that happened in this company that made you laugh the most?"

Watching 1SG Funderburk singing "Happy Birthday" (a la Marylyn Monroe) at the MP Dining In is something that made me fall on the floor laughing, but over time has seemed to work its way into my nightmares.

6. "If you were a superhero what would your superhero name be and why?"

I dated an Officer in the 83rd Chemical Battalion and she used to call me Captain Obvious, but I don't think that's what you're looking for here.

7. "What do you think the company will miss most about you when you're gone?"

I'd like to say my incredible singing voice, but all those who were at last year's Christmas Party know that's not true. I guess that I'd like to be remembered as a Commander who lead from the front, was fair, taught, coached and mentored, and took care of Soldiers.

8. "If you were a pitcher on the Mariners, what song would you want playing in the field when you came out of the bullpen?"

If I was a relief pitcher for the Mariners, the song that would probably be playing when I come out would be that great Seattle sports song, "Let's Not Blow This Lead". However, if it came down to the bottom of the 9th, two outs, bases loaded, and it was up to me to close the game, I'd like to hear "Jesus Walks" by Kanye West as I'm moving from the bullpen out to the mound.

9. Kind of like what music gets you pumped up to go kick some butt?

I try to kick a little butt every day, so I've listened to a lot of music to get me into that special butt-kicking mood. You have your traditional rock anthems ("Thunderstruck" or "Crazy Train") which are always good for a quick pick-me-up, or, digging into my Seattle roots, a little grunge ("Smells Like Teen Spirit" by Nirvana or "Alive" by Pearl Jam) is just what I need to chase away the motor pool blues. Sometimes, believe it or not, even Company Commanders like to get crunk and I need something to get me started before PT ("Get Low" or "Jiggalate"). Sometimes, when I'm out on the town and need to be in a butt kicking mode that invokes the spirit of the Rat Pack I'll listen to "Luck be a Lady" by The Chairman of the Board, Frank Sinatra, or "Feeling Good" by Michale Buble (who I swear is Ole' Blue Eyes in his second life). Or, if I'm in a random butt-kicking mood I need some random music ("Get Loose" by The Salads, "Karate" by Tenacious D, or "The Impression that I Get" by the Mighty Mighty Bosstones). However, I have one song that I have listened to almost every morning on my drive to work. I have it timed so well that I know exactly what point to turn it on so that I'm totally in a butt kicking mood by the time I reach the Company. If you don't have it already, run to the store or start up iTunes and get "The Battle" by the Lyndhurst Orchestra on the soundtrack to the movie Gladiator. If that song doesn't make you want to charge over a hill and lay siege to a small German village I don't know what will.

10. What is your advice for your successor regarding troop morale?

Troops never know what they want, but they know what they don't want. Cryptic, I know, but you gotta go where they are to figure this one out. Get into the barracks, the motorpool, out in sector, and talk to them, relate to them, and be interested in those things that they're interested in. Above all, cultivate a command climate of "work hard, play hard". It's as simple and as mind-bogglingly difficult as that.

11. What was your favorite part of Louisiana (places traveled?).

Call me crazy, but I've always liked the Gator Farm in Natchitoches (get a meat pie on Front Street while you're in town!). You can't beat New Orleans if you need a "lost weekend" (hand grenade, no ice) and no one tailgates like LSU.

12. If you can change one thing about deployments to make your soldiers life and families easier what will it be and why?

As far as making deployments *easier* on families, I suppose we could deploy to Disney World to combat the terrorist threat on the "It's a Small World" ride (the Taliban doll is totally up to no good and must be destroyed). But until that happens, I think we can work on predictability and stability. The R&R leave program is one of the greatest MWR programs out there—the Army really scored a home run with that. If we could figure out a way to offer that program without charging Soldier's leave time so they could take an extended vacation when they get back, then I think we'd really be on to something.

13. How has serving in Iraq changed your view on life?

There was one day during OIF 1 where Saddam Hussein said that if we did not surrender he would drop chemical weapons on us in Kuwait that night. I fell asleep that night using my gas mask as a pillow and wondering if I did in fact die that night, what would I want to be remembered for. I came to the realization that the sum total of my life, or any any other life for that matter, was worth more than any one individual achievement or effort. As it turns out, Mr. Hussein was bluffing and two weeks later I was standing in his Vice President's residence in Baghdad looking at his family photo albums. That sort of put the entire mission in Iraq into perspective for me—that the sum total of all of our efforts was greater than the individual achievements. That's how I feel about the Company's efforts out here. No one achievement of any individual Soldier will ever be able to compare to the total sum of all of our efforts. After I leave Iraq, I will have spent almost as much time in the city of Baghdad as I have in the city of Leesville. As far as I'm concerned, it's not so much about changing my life, so much as about putting my life in perspective and helped me to focus on what's truly important in life.

14. Do you have anything that you would like to say to all the soldiers, spouses and family members of the 258th Military Police Company?

To the spouses and families: It has been my honor and privilege to serve alongside your husband, wife, son, daughter, father, and mothers. I trust in them completely and without reservation and would gladly put my life in their hands. Thank you for trusting me and putting theirs in mine.

To the Soldiers: While in Command, I've tried my best to be a living embodiment of the Army Values: Loyalty to the Company above all else; Duty to the task at hand; Respect towards all Soldiers; Selfless Service to you everyday; Honor the legacy of the 258th MP CO and do nothing to tarnish it's reputation; Integrity so you know I say what I mean, and mean what I say; and the Personal Courage to lead you into combat. I could not have asked for a better group of men and women to be associated with. I am proud to be part of this great unit's legacy, and proud to have served as your Commander. Someone that I respect once told me that Soldiering is an affair of the heart. Over the last year and a half I have kept the 258th MP CO and the business of Soldiering in my heart. It will not be easy to give up.

